

Universal Heir

From the Weight of Inheritance to the Freedom of Being Yourself

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CREDITS

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Preface

These words are a journey through my story. They are the result of an authentic need to reveal what had remained hidden and in silence for so long.

When I discovered that, according to Transgenerational Therapy, I am the *universal heir* within my family tree, doors opened to an uncomfortable and painful reality, where many emotions that had been buried for a long time began to rise to the surface. This book does not seek absolute answers but rather the inner peace that emerges from naming the truth.

My uncle Luis, the co-protagonist of this story, despite having passed away 35 years ago, has continued to live through me: in the choices I have made and the heavy burden I have carried that was never truly mine. This emotional load has spread like the roots of a tree, touching many family members and generations. Uncovering how he truly died, revealing family secrets, and the results of my inner work have brought light and clarity to persistent questions about my own identity.

Who am I? What is genuinely mine? What do I truly desire? Where do I want to go? How can I begin to live from my authentic self? What have I compulsively and automatically repeated? What do I need to do to lighten the weight of my inheritance? This narrative also aims to close a long and complex chapter of my life. I do not claim to hold the ultimate truth, merely to be a narrator of my own story. Above all, I am a seeker. I seek to free myself from the shadows of this old legacy and the emotional chains I have dragged along for decades. I seek rest.

I thank my family for simply being who they are, for their love, care, and understanding throughout my life. I wouldn't have wished to be born into any other family. With humility, I hope that the act of raising my voice and naming the unspoken serves as a springboard, a haven, for other families who may be navigating their own silent storms.

From the pages of this book, I also speak directly to you, Uncle Luis. This journey has been challenging and painful, but necessary to find peace and authenticity. This journey is my liberation. It is another step on my path to healing.

Chapter 1, The Dream

I have the powerful feeling that I am under the influence of things, or matters, left incomplete and unanswered by my parents, my grandparents, and other more distant ancestors. It often seems that within a family, there is an impersonal karma passed down from parents to children. I have always felt that I had to (...) complete, or perhaps continue, things left unfinished by previous generations.
—Carl Jung (*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 1961)

I have just turned 36. It is early in the morning; I am making the bed with my husband, shaking and arranging the pillows, when I suddenly remember the dream, I had.
—Love, do you know what I dreamed last night? I dreamed of my uncle Luis. He told me he had taken his own life.

My husband looks at me with a strange expression and immediately says:
—Well, that's obvious, isn't it?
—What do you mean, obvious? —I reply.
—I've always thought it was suicide, but you insist it was an accident as a way to protect yourself. You mask the truth because you can't name it. The truth is so painful that you are not able to call it suicide.

I feel bewildered by the casualness of his response. I feel confused and vulnerable. Then I think, "Why did I never question my uncle Luis's death before?" Everything feels so strange... "Why is this dream appearing now, 30 years after his passing?"
—I'm sure his death was an accident —I assert.
—Well, whatever you want to believe is fine.
I feel deeply clumsy and naïve, like a child. I visualize that dream over and over in my head.

A few days later, I decide to call my aunt Ana, someone I trust and believe in. Without much preamble, I asked:
—Aunt, do you think my uncle Luis committed suicide?
—No! How could you think that? He was a successful man. He was very happy, content with the life he had. No, dear, what happened was an accident. He simply fell from the rooftop.
Despite being the answer I expect, I feel confused and torn. I sense how my aunt's words bring a certain calm to my mind (as if silencing the voices inside my head), but deep inside, I feel dissatisfied, restless, and anxious.

I ask no one else. However, the doubt has already been planted, as well as the hunger for truth.

Chapter 2, The Family Tree

A year after that dream, in 2018, I fell into a sort of crisis. I didn't feel well at all. I felt a tightness in my chest and a suffocation that grew stronger every day. It was such profound unease that in the mornings, I regretted waking up. Getting out of bed had become an overwhelming task. Not even food had any taste for me. However, I have always had a strong sense of responsibility—a powerful drive to do what must be done. The only reason I got up each day was because of duty. So, despite not wanting to, I would rise to take care of my daughter Antonia, who was in ninth or tenth grade at the time and drive her to school before heading to work. Back then, my husband and I ran a business we had founded in 2012—a technology company that developed software for the advertising industry. Advertising was the career I had graduated in and the same career my uncle Luis had studied many years before.

Thanks to my mother-in-law's recommendation—who knew the crisis and loneliness I was going through, as well as much of my family history—I joined an Al-Anon group to follow the 12-step program. I hoped it would provide me with the tools I lacked to live better and ease the unease that overwhelmed me. My mother-in-law had joined the program after her husband's death and had been attending for several years.

The group was mostly made up of women over 65 or 70, all retired. Before long, I found myself dressing like them, copying their lifestyles, and yearning to retire at 36. But the truth was, I wanted my life to end soon. I found no purpose in anything—nothing motivated me. I felt like a mouse in a maze with no way out, banging against the cardboard walls.

However, alongside these women, I learned a lot about the wise 12-step program. Gradually, I began to uncover the secrets and lies we had told ourselves in my family—how we masked painful and violent events like alcoholism and abuse. I had never heard anyone say that my grandfather was an alcoholic, that my uncles and cousins struggled with drug addiction, or that many women in my family tree suffered from depression. These were all silent truths, desperate to be heard.

I began to perceive the reality of the lies I lived in. And in my desire to do something about it, these women became my friends. Yet, despite this, the longing to die still lingered within me. Although I had no intention of taking my life, the attraction of leaving this world remained constant.

In the midst of this emptiness, I began to hate my career—the one I had chosen under the influence of my uncle's memory—seeing it as hollow, superficial, rotten, and corrupt. The truth is the advertising industry is dominated by intermediaries who centralize media buying. These intermediaries were the primary clients of the company we had founded, demanding exorbitant commissions to include us in the advertising investment plans of brands. The percentages increased by 10 points each year, to the point where the company was no longer sustainable—we owed more than we earned.

By mid-2018, the desire for purification and deep cleansing became irresistible. I wanted to get rid of everything and start over. “But I don’t know how to do anything else,” I kept telling myself. Then, the idea of studying something new emerged in my mind. (In reality, that “something else” was me, though I didn’t know it yet.) I looked for psychology programs, but they seemed shallow, too rigid, and lacking personal focus.